

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

SEPTEMBER 1, 2009

Motion to Create the L.A. County “Permanency for Foster Youth Task Force”

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recognizes the tremendous work done by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and its community partners in providing permanency for thousands of children and youth who have been placed in foster care. Finding permanent legal families for foster youth is a priority for us all. Children deserve to grow up in loving, nurturing families and our emphasis on permanency has been well directed. However, there are still hundreds of children who have not been placed in permanent family settings.

Therefore, we must intensify our efforts to ensure that these children are in permanent homes. Further, we need to ensure that our priorities for permanent placements are on target.

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RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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Some believe that there is conflict between the goals of reunifying children with their birth families versus placing children with adoptive families. In addition to that, many see the role of the Foster Family Agency (FFA) as critical in this process as a large and significant number of children are placed in FFAs. Dual Licensure has become a topic of much contention as many FFAs take the position that Dual Licensure creates a disincentive for reunification. DCFS has deemed that Dual Licensure will address the need for more children to be adopted with the assistance of FFAs. While there is merit to both arguments, more analysis is needed.

THEREFORE, I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1) Direct the Chief Executive Officer to create and chair a "Permanency for Foster Youth in Los Angeles County Task Force" composed of key stakeholders and experts involved with this issue, and that it address the following issues:

(a) What is the order of priority in seeking permanency for youth -- Is it Reunification first, then Adoption and finally Legal Guardianship?

(b) What are the best practices/models throughout the nation regarding permanency that can be adapted or replicated?

(c) Does L.A. County have effective practices, found locally, that can be spread systemwide, such as "Concurrent Planning" and "Point of Engagement?" How do these programs fit into the issue of permanency?

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(d) What are the advantages and disadvantages to FFAs having Dual Licenses?

Is this the most effective and expedient method to reach our goals in the area of permanency?

(e) What role do "After Care" services play and how can these services support and sustain permanency efforts?

2) Instruct the Chief Executive Officer to report back to the Board in 90 days with his findings and recommendations.